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SELF-ACTUALIZATION AND BEYOND.

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TWO TYPES OF LEARNING, EXTRINSIC AND INTRINSIC, ARE DESCRIBED. INTRINSIC LEARNING INVOLVES THOSE PROCESSES WHICH CAN HELP PEOPLE BECOME ALL THAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF BECOMING. INTRINSIC LEARNING IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ALL EDUCATION, INCLUDING ADULT EDUCATION, AND IS ALSO THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF COUNSELING. SELF-ACTUALIZING PEOPLE LEARN THROUGH THE PROCESSES OF INTRINSIC LEARNING. SELF-ACTUALIZING PEOPLE ARE DESCRIBED AS THOSE WHO LISTEN TO THEIR OWN VOICES, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, ARE HONEST, AND WHO WORK. THEY ARE INVOLVED IN A CAUSE OUTSIDE OF THEMSELVES. THEY EXPERIENCE FULLY, VIVIDLY, AND SELFLESSLY WITH FULL CONCENTRATION AND ABSORPTION. AT THE VARIOUS CHOICE POINTS PRESENTED TO THEM, THEY MAKE THE CHOICE FOR GROWTH. THE INTRINSIC LEARNING MODEL IS ESPECIALLY ADAPTIVE IN WORKING WITH ADULTS SINCE THEY ALREADY HAVE CAPACITIES, TALENTS, DIRECTIONS, MISSIONS, AND CALLINGS. THE COUNSELOR'S JOB, THEREFORE, IS TO HELP THEM TO BECOME WHAT THEY ALREADY ARE MORE PERFECTLY AND TO REALIZE WHAT THEY POTENTIALLY CAN BE. THIS ADDRESS WAS PRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE ON THE TRAINING OF COUNSELORS OF ADULTS (CHATHAM, MAY 22-28, 1965). (RM)

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SELF-ACTUALIZATION AND BEYOND

Abraham Maslow*

What I plan to discuss today are ideas that are in midstream rather than ready for formulation into a final version. I find that with my students, and with other people with whom I share these ideas, the notion of self-actualization gets to be almost like a Rorschach ink blot: it frequently tells me more about the person using it than about reality. What I would like to do today is explore some of the nature of self-actualization, not as a grand abstraction, but in terms of the operational meaning of the self-actualizing process. What does self-actualization mean in moment to moment terms? What does it mean on Tuesday at four o'clock?

My investigations on self-actualization (to my horror, dismay, shock, and surprise -- the only ones in existence) were not planned to be research and did not start out as research. They started out as the effort of a young intellectual in his twenties to try to understand two of his teachers whom he loved, adored, and admired, and who were very, very wonderful people. It was a kind of high IQ devotion. I could not be content simply to adore, but sought to understand why these two people were so different from the run-of-the-mill of people in the world.

These two people were Ruth Benedict and Max Wertheimer. They were my teachers after I came with a Ph. D. from the West to New York City, and here were these most remarkable human beings. My training in psychology equipped me [illegible] at all for understanding them. It was as if they were not quite people but something more than people. My own investigation began as a pre-scientific thing. I made descriptions and notes on Max Wertheimer, and I made notes on Ruth Benedict, and when I tried to understand, write about, and think about my own journal and my own notes, I realized in one wonderful moment that their two patterns could be generalized. I was talking about a kind of person, not about two non-comparable individuals. There was wonderful excitement in that. I tried to look to see if this pattern could be found elsewhere, and I did find it elsewhere, in one person after another.

By ordinary standards of laboratory research, of rigorous and controlled research, this simply was not research at all. My generalizations grew out of my selection of certain kinds of people. Obviously, other judges are needed. So far, one man has selected perhaps two dozen people whom

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he liked, or admired very much, and thought were wonderful people and then tried to figure them out and found that he was able to describe a syndrome -- the kind of pattern that seemed to fit all of them. These were people only from Western cultures, people selected with all kinds of built-in biases. But unreliable as it is, that was the only operational definition of self-actualizing people as I described them in my first publication on the subject. After I published the results of my investigations, there appeared perhaps six, eight, or ten other lines of evidence that supported the findings, not by replication but by an approach from a different angle. Carl Rogers' findings and those of his students add up to corroboration for the whole syndrome. The new work with LSD, all the studies on the effects of therapy, (good therapy that is), some test results -- in fact everything I know adds up to corroborated support, though not replicated support, for that study. I personally feel very confident about its major conclusions. I cannot conceive of any research that would make major changes in the pattern, though I am sure there will be minor changes. I have made some of those myself. But my confidence in my rightness is not a scientific datum. If you question the kind of data I have from my researches with monkeys and dogs, you are bringing my competence into doubt or calling me a liar, and I have a right to object. If you question my findings on self-actualizing people, you may do so because you don't know very much about the man who selected the people on whom all the conclusions are based. The conclusions are in the realm of pre-science, the realm of affirmations that are set forth in a form that can be put to test. In that sense, they are scientific.

The people I selected for my investigation were older people, people who had lived much of their lives out and were visibly successful. We do not yet know about the applicability of the findings to young people. We do not know what self-actualization means in other cultures, though a study of self-actualization in China is now in process, as well as one in India. We do not know what the findings of these new studies will be but of one thing I have no doubt: when you select out for careful study very fine people, strong people, creative people, saintly people, sagacious people -- in fact, exactly the kind of people that I picked out, then you get a different view of mankind. You are asking how tall people can grow, what can a human being perhaps become? And these are the Olympic gold medal winners -- the best we have got. Now the fact that somebody can run a hundred yards in less than ten seconds means that in potentiality any baby that is born into the world is, in theory, capable of doing so too. In that sense, any baby that is born into the world can in principle reach the heights that actually exist and can be described. When you look at mankind this way, your thinking about psychology and psychiatry changes radically. For example, 99 per cent of what has been written on so-called learning theory is simply irrelevant to a grown human being. Learning theory does not apply to a human being growing as tall as he can. Most of the literature on learning theory deals with what I call "extrinsic learning" to distinguish it from "intrinsic learning."

Extrinsic learning means collecting acquisitions to yourself like keys in your pocket or coins that you pick up. Extrinsic learning is adding another association or adding another craft. The process of learning to be the best human being you can be is another business altogether. The far goals for adult education, and for any other education, are to find the processes, the ways in which we can help people to become all they are capable of becoming. This I call intrinsic learning and I am confining my remarks today entirely to it. That is the way self-actualizing people learn. To help the client achieve such intrinsic learning is the far goal of counseling.

These things I know with certainty. There are other things that I feel very confident about -- "my smell tells me" so to speak. Yet I have even fewer objective data on these points than I had on those above. Self-actualization is hard enough to define. How much harder it is to ask the question, "Beyond self-actualization, what?" Or, if you will, "Beyond authenticity, what?" Just being honest is, after all, not sufficient in all this. What else can we say of self-actualizing people?

Self-actualizing people are, without one single exception, involved in a cause outside their own skin, in something outside of themselves. They are devoted, working at something, something which is very precious to them -- some calling or vocation in the old sense, the priestly sense. They are working at something which fate has called them to somehow and which they work at and which they love, so that the work-joy dichotomy there disappears. One devoted his life to the law, another to justice, another to beauty or truth. All, in one way or another, devote their lives to the search for what I have called the "Being" values, (B for short), the ultimate values which are intrinsic, which cannot be reduced to anything more ultimate. There are about fourteen of these "B" values including truth and beauty and goodness of the ancients, and perfection, simplicity, comprehensiveness, and several more. These "B" values are described in the appendix to my book, "Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences," which came out about six months ago. They are the values of being. The existence of these "B" values adds a whole set of complications to the structure of self-actualization. These "B" values behave like needs. I have called them meta-needs. Deprivation of them breeds certain kinds of pathologies which have not yet been described. I call them "meta-pathologies" -- the sickness of the soul which comes, e.g., from living among liars all the time and not trusting anyone. And just as we need counselors to help people with the simpler problems of unmet needs, so we may need meta-counselors to help the soul-sickness that grows from the unfulfilled meta-needs. In certain definable and empirical ways, it is necessary for man to live in beauty rather than ugliness, as it is necessary for him to have food for an aching belly or rest for a weary body. In fact, I would go so far as to claim that these "B" values are the meaning of life for most people, but many people don't even recognize that they have these meta-needs. Part of our job as counselors may be to make them aware of

these needs in themselves, just as the classical psychoanalyst has made his patients aware of their instinctoid basic needs. Ultimately, perhaps, we will come to think of ourselves as philosophical or religious counselors.

We try to help our students move and grow toward self-actualization. These youngsters are all wrapped up in value problems. These youngsters are, in principle, very wonderful people, though in actuality they often seem to be little more than snotty kids, but I assume (in the face of all behavioral evidence sometimes) that they are in the classical grand sense, idealistic. I assume that they are looking for values and that they would love to have something to devote themselves to, to be patriotic about, to worship, adore, love. These youngsters are making choices from moment to moment of going forward or retrogressing, moving backward or moving toward self-actualization. As a counselor, or a meta-counselor, what can you tell them about becoming more fully themselves? What do you do when you self-actualize? Do you grit your teeth and squeeze? What does self-actualization mean in terms of actual behavior, actual procedure?

First of all, self-actualization means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption. It means experiencing without the self-consciousness of the adolescent. At this moment of experiencing, the person is wholly and fully human. This is a self-actualization moment. This is a moment when the self is actualizing itself. As individuals, we all experience such moments occasionally. As counselors, you can help clients to experience them more often. You can encourage them to become totally absorbed in something and to forget their poses and their defenses and their shyness -- to go at it whole hog. From the outside, we can see that this can be a very sweet moment. In these youngsters who are trying to be very tough and cynical and sophisticated, we can see the recovery of some of the guilelessness of childhood, some of the innocence and sweetness of the face can come back as they devote themselves fully to a moment and throw themselves fully into the experiencing of it. The key word for this is "selflessly," and our youngsters suffer from too little selflessness, too much self-consciousness, self-awareness.

Second, let us think of life as a process of choices, one after another at various choice points. At each point there is a progression choice and a regression choice. There may be a movement toward defense, toward safety, toward being afraid, but over on the other side is the growth choice. To make the growth choice instead of the fear choice a dozen times a day is to move a dozen times a day toward self-actualization. Self-actualization is an on-going process; it means making each of the many single choices about whether to lie or be honest, whether to steal or not steal at a particular point, to make each of these choices as a growth choice. This is movement toward self-actualization.

Third, to talk of self-actualization implies that there is a self to be actualized. A human being is not a tabula rasa, not a lump of clay or plastocene, but a something which is already there, at least a cartilaginous structure of some kind. A human being is at minimum, his temperament, his biochemical balances, and so on. There is a self, and what I have sometimes referred to as "listening to the impulse voices" means letting the self emerge. Most of us, most of the time, (and especially does this apply to children, young people), listen not to ourselves but to Mommy's voice being introjected or Daddy's voice, or to the voice of the Establishment of the Elders, of authority or tradition. As a simple first step toward self-actualization, I sometimes suggest to my students that when they are given a glass of wine and asked how they like it, they don't look at the label on the bottle in order to get the cue about whether or not they should like it, but that instead they close their eyes if possible, and they make a hush, and they look within themselves and try to shut out the noise of the world and then to savor it on their tongues and look to the Supreme Court inside there and then come out and say, "I like it" or "I don't like it." That statement is different from the usual kind of phoniness that we all indulge in. At a party recently, I caught myself looking at the label on a bottle and assuring my hostess that she had indeed selected a very good Scotch. But then I caught myself -- what was I saying? I knew little about Scotches. I had no idea whether this was good or not, but this kind of thing we all do. Refusing to do it is part of the ongoing process of actualizing yourself. Does your belly hurt? Or does it feel good? Does this taste good on your tongue? Do you like lettuce?

Fourth, when in doubt, be honest rather than not. I am covered by that phrase "when in doubt..." so that we need not argue too much about diplomacy. Frequently, when we are in doubt we are not honest. Our college students are not honest much of the time. They are playing games and posing. The boys swagger around trying to look like something out of a movie, and the girls are trying to appear glamorous. They do not take easily to the suggestion to be honest. But looking within one's self for many of the answers implies taking responsibility. That is in itself a great step toward actualization. This matter of responsibility has been little studied. It is not a part of the American Psychological Association's psychology. It doesn't turn up in our textbooks, for who can investigate responsibility in white rats? It is an almost tangible part of psychotherapy. In psychoanalysis you can see it, you can feel it, you know this moment of responsibility. You know what it feels like. This is one of the great steps. Each time one takes responsibility, this is an actualizing of the self.

Fifth, we have talked so far of experiencing without self-awareness, of making the growth choice rather than the fear choice, of listening to the impulse voices and of being honest and taking responsibility. All these things are steps toward self-actualization and all of them guarantee better life choices. Do each of these little things each time the choice point comes

and they will add up to better choices about what is constitutionally right for you, what your destiny is, who your wife or husband will be, what your mission in life will be. You cannot choose wisely for a life unless you dare to listen to yourself, yourself, at each moment in life, and to say calmly, "No, I don't like such and such."

The art world, in my opinion, has been captured by a small group of opinion and taste makers, whom I feel suspicious about. That is an ad hominem judgment, but it seems fair enough for people who set themselves up as able to say, "You like what I like or else you are a fool." We must teach people to listen to their own tastes. Most people don't do it. You rarely hear before a puzzling painting, "That is a puzzling painting." We had a dance program at Brandeis a few nights ago -- a weird thing altogether, with electronic music, tapes, and people doing surrealistic and dada things -- and when the lights went up everybody looked stunned and nobody knew what to say. In that kind of situation most people will make some smart chatter instead of saying, "I would like to think about this." Making an honest statement involves daring to be different, unpopular, non-conformist. If we cannot teach our students, young or old, about being prepared to be unpopular, we might just as well give up right now at anything. To be courageous rather than afraid is another version of the same thing.

Sixth, self-actualization is not only an end state but it is also the process of actualizing your potentialities at any time, in any amount. It is a matter of becoming smarter by studying if you are an intelligent person, as our college students are. Self-actualization means using your IQ, using your intelligence. It does not mean doing some far-out thing necessarily, but it may mean going up to your dormitory room and sweating, studying, getting the mathematics or physics. Self-actualization can consist of finger exercises at a piano keyboard. Self-actualization means working to do well the thing that you want to do. To become a second-grade physician is not a good path to self-actualization. You want to be first-rate, or as good as you can be.

Seventh, peak experiences are transient moments of self-actualization. They are moments of ecstasy which you cannot buy, cannot guarantee, cannot even seek. You must be as C. S. Lewis wrote, "surprised by joy." But you can set up the conditions so that peak-experiences are more likely, or you can perversely set up the conditions so that they are less likely. You can reassure young people about discovering things they do not like to do. Some of our youngsters at Brandeis have come in prepared to be astronauts, and they take physics and math and find out that it's not what they thought. Breaking up an illusion, getting rid of a false notion, learning what they are not good at, learning what their potentialities are not -- this is also part of discovering what yourself is in fact.

Practically everyone does have peak experiences, only not everyone knows it. Some people wave these small mystical experiences aside. Helping people to recognize these little moments of ecstasy when they happen is one of the jobs of the counselor -- or meta-counselor. But, how does one's psyche, with nothing external in the world to point at -- there is no blackboard there -- look into another person's secret psyche and then try to communicate? You have to work out a new way of communication. I have tried one. It is described in another appendix in that same book, under the title, "Rhapsodic Communications." I think that kind of communication may be more of a model for teaching, counseling, for helping adults to become as fully developed as they can be than the kind we are used to when we see teachers writing on the board. If I love Beethoven, and I hear something in a quartet that you don't, how do I teach you to hear? The noises are there, obviously. But I hear something very, very beautiful and you look blank. You hear the sounds. How do I get you to hear the beauty? That is more our problem of teaching than teaching the A, B, C's, or demonstrating arithmetic on the board, or pointing to a dissection of the frog. These things are external to both people, and one has a pointer and you can both look at the same time. This kind of teaching is easy, the other one much harder, but it is part of our job as counselors. It is meta-counseling.

Eighth, finding out who you are, what you are, what you like, what you don't like, what is good for you and what is bad, where you are going and what your mission is -- opening yourself up to yourself, means the exposure of psycho-pathology. It means identifying defenses, and after defenses have been identified, it means encouraging people to give them up. And this is painful, for defenses are against something which is unpleasant, but it is worth while. If the psycho-analytic literature has taught us nothing else, it has taught us that repression is not a good way of solving problems. Let me talk about one defense mechanism that is not mentioned in the psychology textbooks, though it is a very important defense mechanism to the snotty and yet idealistic youngster of today. It is the defense mechanism of de-sacralizing. These youngsters mistrust the possibility of values and virtues. They feel themselves swindled or thwarted in their lives. Most of them have, in fact, dopey parents whom they don't respect very much, parents who are quite confused about values themselves, and who frequently are simply terrified of their children and who never punish them or stop them from doing things that are wrong. So you have a situation where the youngsters simply despise their elders -- often for good and sufficient reason. And the youngsters have learned to make a big generalization and they won't listen to anybody who is grown up, especially if the grownup uses the same words which they've heard from the hypocritical mouth. They have heard their fathers talk about being honest or being brave or being bold and seen their fathers being the opposite of all these things. The youngsters have learned to reduce the person to the concrete object, and to refuse to see what he might be, or refuse to see him in symbolic values, or refuse to see him or her eternally. Our kids have de-sacralized sex, for example. Sex is nothing, it is a natural thing and they have made it so natural that it has lost its poetic qualities in many

instances, which means that it has lost practically everything. Self-actualization means giving up this defense mechanism and learning, or being taught, to re-sacralize. (I have had to make up these words because the English language is rotten for good people. It has no decent vocabulary for the virtues. Even the nice words get all smeared up. Love, for instance).

Re-sacralizing means being willing, once again to see a person "under the aspect of eternity," as Spinoza says, or to see him in the medieval Christian unitive perception, that is, being able to see the sacred, the eternal, the symbolic. It is to see Woman with a capital W and everything that that implies even when one looks at a particular woman. Another example: you go to medical school and dissect a brain. Certainly something is lost if you don't get awed, but see the brain only as one concrete thing without the unitive perception. Open to re-sacralization, you see it as a sacred object also, see its symbolic value, see it as a figure of speech, see it, so to speak, in its poetic aspects.

Re-sacralization often means an awful lot of corny talk -- "very square," the kids would say. But for the counselor, especially for the counselor of older people, where these philosophical questions about religion and the meaning of life come up, this is a most important way of helping the person to move toward self-actualization. The youngsters may say that it is square, the logical positivists may say that it is meaningless, but for the person who seeks your help in this process it is obviously very meaningful and very important and you'd better answer him or you're not doing what it is your job to do.

Put all of these points together and we see that self-actualization is not a matter of one great moment. It is not true that on Thursday at four o'clock the trumpet blows and one steps into the Pantheon forever and altogether. Self-actualization is a matter of degree, of little accessions accumulated one by one. Our students are inclined to wait for some kind of inspiration to strike and then to say that, "At 3:23 on this Thursday I became self-actualized!" People who can be selected as self-actualizing subjects, people who fit the criteria, go about it in these little ways: they listen to their own voices, they take responsibility, they are honest, and they work. They find out who they are and what they are in terms not only of their mission in life but of the way their feet hurt when they wear such and such shoes and whether they do or do not like eggplant or stay up all night if they drink too much beer. All this is what the real self means. They find their own biological natures, their congenital natures which are irreversible or difficult to change.

These are the things people do as they move toward self-actualization. Who, then, is a counselor? And how can he help the people who come to him to make this movement in the direction of growth?

Counseling is not concerned with training nor with molding, nor with teaching in the ordinary sense of telling people what to do and how to do it. It is not concerned with propaganda. It is a Taoistic uncovering. Taoistic means the non-interfering, the "let be." Taoism is not a laissez-faire philosophy nor a philosophy of neglect nor of refusal to help or care. As a kind of model of this process we might think of a therapist who, if he is a decent therapist and also a decent human being, would never dream of imposing himself upon his patients or propagandizing in any way, or trying to make the patient into an imitation, or to use himself as a model. What he does, the good clinical therapist, is to help his particular client to unfold, to break through the defenses against his self-knowledge, to recover himself and get to know himself. Ideally, the therapist's rather abstract frame of reference, the textbooks he has read, the schools that he has gone to, his beliefs about the world -- these should never be perceptible to the patient. Respectful of the inner nature, the being, the essence of this "younger brother," he would recognize that the best way for him to lead a good life is to be more fully himself. The people we call sick are the people who are not themselves, the people who have built up all sorts of neurotic defenses against being human. And just as it makes no difference to the rosebush whether the gardener is Italian or French or Swedish, so it should make no difference to the younger brother how his helper learned to be a helper. What the helper has to give are certain services that are independent of his being Swedish or Catholic or Mohammedan or Freudian or whatever he is.

These basic concepts include, imply, and are completely in accord with the basic concepts of Freudian psycho-dynamics. It is a Freudian principle that unconscious aspects of the self are repressed and that the finding of the true self requires the uncovering of these unconscious aspects. Implicit is a belief that truth heals much. Learning to break through one's repressions, to know one's self, to hear the impulse voices, to uncover the triumphant nature, to reach knowledge, insight, and the truth -- these are the requirements.

A ten-year-old paper by Lawrence Kubie, "The Forgotten Man in Education," originally published in the Harvard Education Review, made long ago the point that one ultimate goal of education is to help the person become a human being, as fully human as he can possibly be. If you do not accept the importance of the unconscious and work to do away with repression and defenses, then education is missing its ultimate goal.

I have used the words "therapy," "psychotherapy," and "patient." Actually, I hate all those words and I hate the medical model that they imply because the medical model suggests that the person who comes to the counselor is a sick person, beset by disease, by illness, seeking a cure, whereas, actually, of course, we hope that the counselor will be the person who helps to foster the self-actualization of people rather than helping to cure a disease.

The helping model has to give way, too; it just doesn't fit. It makes us think of the counselor as the person or the professional who knows, reaching down from his privileged position above to the poor jerks below who don't know and have to be helped in some way, the poor cripples who don't talk back much. Nor is the counselor to be a teacher, in the usual sense, because what teachers have specialized in and gotten to be very good at, is what I have called "extrinsic learning," whereas the process of growing into the best human being you can be is, instead, intrinsic learning.

The existential therapists have wrestled with this question of models, and I can recommend to you James Bugental's book, Beyond Authenticity, What?, for a discussion of the matter. Jim Bugental suggests that we call counseling or therapy "ontogogy" which means trying to help people to grow to their fullest possible height. Perhaps that's a better word than the one I once suggested, a word derived from a German author, "psychogogy," which means the education of the psyche. Whatever the word we use, I think that the concept we will eventually have to come to is one that Alfred Adler suggested a long, long time ago when he spoke of the "older brother." The older brother is the loving person who takes responsibility, just as you do for your young kid brother. Of course you know more, you've lived longer, but you are not qualitatively different, you are not in another realm of discourse, and you help him in particular ways. Earlier I used the word "horticultural." I hope you caught the reference there, the idea of helping onions to grow to be onions and not trying to change them over into turnips. Let me give you another example of the kind of thing I am talking about:

If a young man wants to be a professional prizefighter, he goes to some professional gymnasium, offers himself to the manager, and says, "I would like to be a boxer." And then the manager, characteristically, I'm told (I don't know, I've never tried this myself), will get one of his experienced fighters and say, "Take him into the ring and try him out." The instructions are always "stretch him." That is, let him go as far as he can, see how hard he can hit, find out the hardest he can possibly hit, find out how much he can take, see how fast he is, see how good his reflexes are -- stretch him to his fullest capacity and get some notion there of the real self -- the intrinsic self I was talking about before. This is the job of finding capacity, of determining whether this young man does seem to have promise (and that itself is an instinctoid statement). Now suppose he's good, he's fast, he's strong, he's powerful, and so on. If he looks good, do you think that the manager gives him a manual to read and tells him, "Now you forget everything you know and you start at Point 1 and you go on to Points 2 and 3 and 4? No. He takes this young man and tries to train him to be the best possible kind of fighter that he already is. He tries to improve him and he tries to make him better than he is, in his own style. See how different this is from the "teaching somebody who doesn't know nothin'," model! A child comes along, one who doesn't know any French at all. You pour it

into him. You start from scratch. But especially with adults we are not in that position. We already have a start, we already have capacities, talents, directions, missions, callings, and then the job is, if we are to take this model seriously, to help them to be more perfectly what they already are, to be more full, more actualizing, more realizing in fact what they are in potentiality.

DISCUSSION III

Dr. Abraham H. Maslow and Participants

Lovell:

Dr. Maslow, as I understood it when you were talking about counseling I thought I heard you make a rather positive statement that the values of the counselor would have to be forgotten. Yet, as I heard you talk about meta-counseling, it seemed to me that values came back into the picture, and not only the development of the client's own value system. There was the implication, at least, in your example about sex and its possible poetry, that you as a counselor or I as a counselor would have that value that we were trying to get the client to see. Now, is there a contradiction here?

Maslow:

Let's say, rather, a problem that has to be worked out. The situation that we have now is that there are sufficient research data from the Rogers people, and sufficient clinical experience from the existential psychiatrists, about the old mirror model of the psychoanalyst, the Freudian psychoanalyst, trying to be anonymous. There are positive data to indicate that it works better when the therapist permits himself to be perceived, where he is spontaneous, where he shows himself as a person. What I was trying to say is that the particular language of concept, the particular framework of instruction that therapists have had, ought not to show, and I would still hold to that. Any therapist who uses jargon anyhow is not functioning well because the language that you should use in psychotherapy is the language of the patient, in particular, images which are of importance to him. What I meant quite specifically was that the patient should not know which school of psychoanalysis the therapist belongs to -- it's irrelevant. It doesn't belong there. Showing himself as a person is relevant -- being honest, candid, open. Now it's a real tricky question which nobody has worked out yet -- it's sort of a counsel of perfection to say, "If I am a therapist, I express myself clearly about what I like and dislike, and so on. My hope is to teach the patient that I am not forcing anything on him, that I would be disappointed if he simply imitated, and that I hope what he would do is take this as an encouragement for him to find out about what he liked -- and then, as between two gentlemen, of course, we needn't like the same thing, and yet we can be friends." Well, I have nothing to report, there are no researches on this, how possible this is I don't really know. It is possible in principle; is it possible in practice? I know that I am awfully careful about many of my opinions in my classes; I learned a long time ago to be very, very careful about expressing myself about religion in any way because this is too hot a topic, to fragile for students -- I can do great damage. I don't want casually

to attack or criticize something that is so basic, and these days the same thing is true for politics. I simply keep my mouth shut most of the time in the classroom, feeling that my position gives me an unfair advantage to start with. This is the problem we have to work out. Ultimately, as between gentlemen, as between grown people, I think it is certainly desirable for us to say that we must learn to give up a great deal of the phony politeness we have anyway in ordinary social intercourse. If we were truly friendly with each other then we could be ourselves, and that means to let all the disagreements be out on the table. I have just finished conducting a seminar with a colleague of mine -- this is on the psychology of utopias, a fascinating thing. This man is a great historian and we did the seminar together. He is about as different from me as it is possible for a human being to be; we disagree about everything -- different types of character, different Weltanschauung, different philosophies, different values, everything. Well, I thought this was very good, and I admire this man very much, we're great friends. I thought it was wonderful for the students to see two intellectuals hammer away at each other, express disagreement, and not without drawing blood, which was all right, and I can like him even though he does disagree with me. I wish we could do more of that.

Lovell:

It seems that something about the counseling relationship in which the patient can see the counselor as a person and still not imitate is certainly going to demand that the client be brought to the point where he no longer looks upon the relationship in the medical model, because if he does then it is going to be prescriptive for him rather than sharing. Somehow the counselor is going to have to learn to get the client away from the medical model before this relationship can work.

Maslow:

Well, I haven't seen the details of Rogers' work recently in which this stuff came up about something that he called being congruent -- honest and candid, in the therapeutic relationship. It correlates with therapeutic success. No, I don't know the details there.

Woditsch:

Dr. Rollo May, in response to a very similar question, gave almost identically the same response that you did, and he feels also that there is -- I don't know what evidence he has -- correlation of success of psychotherapy with this kind of friendliness of relationship and this kind of congruence between patient and therapist. They would admit affiliation, everything, no matter how conflicting these might be -- and the patient would find this a much more comfortable situation, to have a tangible human being to deal with rather than a mirror in which he sees nothing but his own reflection.

Schletzer:

This doesn't mean just not hiding your values, but admitting them openly so that the client knows what values you do have rather than thinking that you don't have any -- being explicit about them, not in terms of whether to accept or reject.

Maslow:

I disagree a little with Rollo May. The arguments continue because I think that as teachers, as therapists, as counselors, we need as many weapons in our armamentarium as we can have, and I don't know why we have to insist that only one kind of pill will cure all diseases. I think, and my own impression is very, very strong, that the mirror model of the psychoanalyst is still a useful model for certain people and in certain instances. I think there are some people who will never learn about their insides unless you allow them to develop these crazy fantasies, the transference fantasies, and then the psychoanalyst can say, "Well now I never said one word about that. This is your creation." It is very useful. I don't have to stick to one or the other.

Meyer:

The self-actualization model, or the process of self-actualization, is actually a much more open-ended model in terms of potentiality than is the traditional analytic model, as far as I can understand it. How do you know -- is it necessary to know ahead of time -- what potentialities lie ahead? In other words, when you are working with a client towards his self-actualization, is it necessary to have goals in mind ahead of time, or do they develop through the process of working with the client?

Maslow:

I never thought of it in just that way; just off the cuff my guess is that it's a little of both. I have very clearly in mind, in my teaching, writing, and so on, the feeling that certain of the goals, certain of the values in this whole hierarchy of values, are universal. I've never run across any human being yet or heard of anyone who didn't need maternal love. I think we can take that for granted as a species characteristic. So, also, with the "B" values. We have less data about this, yet it seems very clear to me that with various modifications for retarded people or brain-injured people or whatever that these are universal goals which may be distant or near, available or unavailable. But it may be that in practice this doesn't matter very much since the Taoistic methods of teaching and the Taoistic uncovering, fostering non-interfering methods of counseling, guidance, therapy, teaching, of parental bringing up of children -- in all these, the main technique is, in

general, having a good range of choices for the person which he then chooses. Generally, the way in which I know what's good for you is that you choose it under good conditions. It may very well be that -- this is the way I think we bring up our children generally -- we rely very heavily upon their choices and the way in which they reveal their temperaments. Any of you who have more than one child knows exactly what I am talking about. One kid naps in the afternoon and the other one doesn't, and you can't do anything about it, and it's stupid to try. So, in effect, what you're saying is that the child lets you know what he wants and our assumption is, on the whole, that what he wants is good for him.

Participant:

How would it work exactly if I had, let's say, not a two-year-old child but people in their forties and fifties?

Maslow:

I don't quite know. We have a lot of experimental research in this business on the destruction of the wisdom of the body by habit, by convention and so on. How much we can transfer to the adult situation the pretty clear findings from children and from other animal species, I don't know. It's a matter for research, I guess.

Senders:

As you were talking, I was wondering about the possible paradox of some individuals for whom self-actualization might mean the honest realization that they did not want to become all that they were capable of becoming, and I wondered if we could think about that a little bit. I was thinking, some of the very practical questions posed to people like our counselors in the women's programs -- perhaps George and his program, I don't know -- but the person who says, "I am comfortable. Peak experiences are all very well, but peaks are often cold and windy places and I don't want to be cold. The avoidance of wind is one of my basic values, and that's me, and I want to be comfortable with my family with a partial commitment rather than the full-fledged commitment that would make me great." How about that. How do we deal with that?

Maslow:

Well, I don't deal with it myself. I've been, as you recall, doing research -- I've selected out a certain kind of research to do -- but there'e one person who has been dealing with it, Charlotte Bühler. She has a recent book on values in psychotherapy and there we've had discussions about just this problem. She has worked with the kind of person that I have not worked with,

less well educated for instance than mine. I've worked only with a highly selected population -- people with very, very strong traditional values. I'm totally convinced about this in sort of a naive way. One group of Mormons that I remember Charlotte Bühler worked with, who were uneducated and who were just biblical, didn't want to call this business into question at all; another group that she particularly sought out were women in traditional setups, women whose traditions were to be passive and self-abnegating, the usual Mediterranean picture of the place of the woman and were getting along very nicely. Her feeling was that to talk about self-actualization there is not very helpful, and instead she suggested the more general word to speak about "human fulfillment." It is her opinion, her experience -- which I have not had -- that it is possible to adjust to life and to seek fulfillment via, let's say, the self-abnegation of the Mexican woman who supports everybody around the joint -- men, children, and so on, and who makes a value out of this, who is proud of it. Well, if you learn anything from anthropology, you learn that human beings are awfully flexible and that they can relate to life in many, many different ways. If I raised the question of -- let me say it in another way -- there is a philosopher by the name of Robert Hartmann who proposed a way of describing humanness, which, for research purposes, I think we may well use. It's a simple catalogue of all the capacities of human beings, and then you check them off, so to speak, and have a 92 per cent human being. Then we could say -- it's perfectly true -- that if I lose one eye, in that sense I am less a human being, I have lost certain capacities. Well, if you take it from this point of view, then I may rephrase your question and rephrase Charlotte Bühler's theory in terms of how much humanness in this sense can you give up without going into catastrophies? There's no question whatever that in the Mediterranean woman's situation, which I have been fascinated with because it poses this kind of theoretical problem, the women have many advantages in being Spanish women or southern Italian women, or whatever -- many advantages -- and especially all the advantages of security. Yet, it was very clear with the Mexican women who, I remember having spent a year in Mexico -- are very female, at least to the eye of the male onlooker, and who accept themselves very much as female animals and who walk with a particular swish, something the American women don't have. I spent much of my sabbatical year observing this, (laughter) and comparing them with the American women who would show up in big buses in the square there and come out looking stiff and stilted and ready for an osteopath, you might say -- by comparison with these limber women who walked like cats almost. Well, this was very nice in itself, but I must report to you also that, without a huge amount of experience, Mexican women are as if they'd had their heads cut off -- they're dull, boring women who know nothing about the world, who do not use their intelligence, who do not use any of the capacities that we value highly, who have lived the most dreary life, it seems to me, in terms of human imagination, in terms of the possibility for a rich life, who sit around chatting about perfectly idiotic things for seventy years. Do you get my point? The Mexican women look happy; they seem to be all right.

Participant:

The question is: dull and boring to whom?

Maslow:

To their own men, essentially. No Mexican husband in his right mind spends ten minutes with his wife after the honeymoon. They are so damn dull apparently that even the Mexican men go out and get themselves a mistress some place else.

Two Participants:

She's another Mexican woman, isn't she?

Maslow:

Not a housewife!

O'Hern:

How did you view the American woman in the same location?

Maslow:

American women looked a lot better. I got very patriotic down there. (laughter)

Siegle:

Ginny's question bugged me a little bit. I think maybe, because...

Maslow:

It's an important question -- very important.

Siegle:

Well, it may be very important -- it's important to me -- but I didn't understand -- was the reference to the peak experience as possibly being a cold and bleak place -- empty?

Lichterman:

She's poetic, that's all!

Siegle:

Well, the poetry may be inaccurate in the description, you see. At least I have to get back to two of your terms which I still do not understand after listening hard -- one was the idea of the peak experience -- I thought you were saying something quite different -- and the other is the idea of meta-need and meta-counseling. You see, on the peak experience, my assumption was that what you would call a peak experience could not be bleak and empty.

Senders:

I think I can clarify this if I may, just a minute. I probably shouldn't have said that. What I really meant was that a peak, not a peak experience -- a peak can be a cold and windy place. To be completely actualized...

Maslow:

You can't do that.

Senders:

Well, James Reeb is dead. Not everybody wants to be dead.

Siegle:

Well, this is clear that peak experience is never cold and bleak.

Maslow:

This is the definition of it, I agree.

Siegle:

Just for definition purposes, is that clear?

Maslow:

The peak experiences that I have collected would again have to be operationally defined; other people have collected what they call "desolation experiences" and so on. I set the thing up by asking for moments of ecstasy. Well, nobody's going to give me moments of tragedy then -- but cognitive changes can occur in moments of tragedy, too; I just didn't collect them. But the peak experiences as defined by my procedures are never cold and bleak. They're wonderful.

Hoffman:

But they are also experiences that happened in a framework of a whole, a whole life, with everything else happening, so that they can stand out and be appreciated as such. One doesn't live a whole life of peak experiences.

Maslow:

No -- is that relevant to the way the data are shaping up? Either that -- there is a degree of peak-i-ness -- there are the classical, the highest and the most profound experiences, as described by the great mystics and so on, and then it scales on down -- you can have more powerful and less powerful ones -- it depends on the level of discourse. Extremely powerful ones, the great ones that come close to being the mystical experience, have been described in literature. Characteristically you'd find these two or three times in a person's life. But supposing we were to talk about that, I assure you as you got the picture of what this was like and what it felt like, you would then start perceiving lesser degrees of it. Easily, then, we could talk about everyday, practically, small peak experiences. It is a matter of degree. My guess is that one day we're going to instrument this; I am sure we will be able to have a dial which will tell us -- that's a 32-level peak experience. How could it be? The whole autonomic nervous system changes; this is a big shift to the nervous system. I am sure we can tap it off one day and that's what I mean that there are matters of degree. I think -- it seems to be my experience anyway -- that I can get a little of the peaky quality in a small thing like having a good beer at lunch.

Bryant:

Does not the peak also imply the valley? In other words, the deprivation giving the contrast, as against the plateau? The more deprivation, the more likely there is also to be a contrast?

Maslow:

No, it doesn't work out that way, although that sounds a priori to be sensible. In the mystical literature there have been a fair number who claim that the mystic experience came after some sort of hitting the bottom of the barrel; the dark night of the soul, after, as a consequence, you see, on the rebound from that.

Bryant:

The fasting experience.

Maslow:

That's right; but I can say that this is absolutely not necessary -- it does happen that way but it does also happen another way. Peak experiences can come as a climax of let's say, a very wonderful day, in which everything has been marvelous and it just keeps on getting more marvelous and somehow at the end as you sit down and think of it, you just go into a mystic experience.

Bryant:

What about the anticipatory nature of this thing? Doesn't the peak really get its color from the anticipation of it? Rather than from the actual realization?

Maslow:

No, not ordinarily. Not statistically, normally. It can, of course, and one can hope -- one can set up the circumstances so that you're more likely or less likely to have the experience in whatever your sensitivities are -- I mean, if you're very sensitive to music you can arrange it so that you're very likely to get a peak experience from the Kroll Quintet, even though you can't guarantee it -- or from art, or many people from sex. Sex is one of the major sources of peak experiences, in a good situation, in a loving situation. Or, we each know our own. I'm getting soft in my old age now as I seem to be much more susceptible to babies. Very soft about young children. I get very profound emotional experiences. Well, you can set this up for yourself. You can look for them for yourself; find out what you are especially sensitive to, what you are not sensitive to. You may have a tin ear for music, but you may be very sensitive about color, for instance; that may be for you.

Bryant:

I was thinking about it both from the point of view of the counselor concerned and of the counselee. When the counselee who is, let's say ... 75% dead, he has no sense of a peak experience, no expectation of one, and his whole situation is such that he feels there is no potential for one.

Maslow:

We haven't done enough work at this level. I've worked only with highly articulate people who are good introspectors, you know, else I didn't bother. Maybe we should find out at other levels. A matter again of empirical work. But, I can tell you of an experience even at the level at which I work with intelligent, educated people -- this was recently at CalTech. I was there for a visit, and one young man was my assistant, (I am also now very sensitive to young men -- I have three daughters who aren't married -- so I keep thinking of young men with a fondness which I have never experienced before -- I have no sons) and this young man just looked beautiful to me.

We were talking -- he was a mathematician -- and I wanted to be close and here was this young fellow and I talked peak experiences with him. Inside of a single hour, he was being apologetic about his mathematics -- naturally he knew my work and therefore I would be against mathematics -- I disagreed and said no. We talked about it, about the beauties of mathematics, which, in fact, are there. And then I asked him, have you not had this experience? Did you not get a chill up and down your spine when the calculating machine came up just the right way at the right moment? Didn't you get stunned with awe to find out that the damned equation really does work? And then, he rather shamefacedly and with some embarrassment -- and to me, with nobody else around -- admitted yes, that this was why he loved mathematics. But he kept it secret. Had he ever mentioned this to any other living human being? No, he had never, never mentioned it. Had he heard any of his mathematics professors speak about these things? Never! And then the presentation of mathematics as a branch of aesthetics -- well, peak experience stuff -- that line of work can lead you into not only this world, of which I have a little inkling, but into worlds of which I know nothing -- the female world for instance. By collecting peak experiences from women, I think I've learned a lot more about women's interior worlds and how they look at things, feel things, what gives them the ecstasy. Or for mesomorphs (I'm an ectomorph). I was born to be a professor. Well, I've never quite understood about people who go surf-boarding, or climbing mountain peaks. I can now admit it. I've always thought of it as a mild insanity of some sort, but then when I interviewed this kind of person, and he could report to me when I asked about peak experiences. A man, what do you call that diving under the water, scuba-diving -- reported to me in words which were clearly mystical, peak-y, in phrases that just rang a bell -- words which I could have found in St. Theresa's writings long ago -- the same words, the same feelings. Then I could feel more a kin to other people, their triggers for the peak experiences. We all have the same experiences, apparently, but the triggers are different. Well, that means communication of a kind and I think you notice here that the whole thing is empirical. You can ask about many of the old assumptions, which were made in studying sixth-rate mystics. They're wrong when you open it out. You might say there's the mysticism of everyday life -- the mysticism of the kitchen -- where it can also happen. That the dark night of the soul, this kind of thing, is a necessity -- it's not. The depression afterwards, that is, being deprived of this great experience -- definitely not -- it just doesn't happen much. More often, this is a memory upon which you can live; it's like having a deposit in the bank of some sort and all you have to do is think of it and you smile for the rest of your life. Now that's different from what you get in the books on mysticism, of people who are miserable until they have the next experience.

Participant:

Dr. Maslow, in the people you have studied, have you found that these people have been the seeking, striving, perceiving kinds of people all their lives, or

would there have been sort of plateau when perhaps not much growth was apparent, or have their lives been all sort of "of a piece."

Maslow:

Oh, oh, I see. First, I was going to say, I just don't know. I don't have much life history material but I know a little anyway, enough to point out that there are some instances in which the self-actualization, and all the peak-ing, and all that goes with it, comes after a dark night of the soul or a bad period. Two of my subjects -- I happen to know because it was very dramatic -- were neurotic, seriously neurotic, in their forties. It happens so frequently with people in their forties, fifties, and so on, this kind of middle-age. If we could only do a reversion, go into retreat, officially that is, get our philosophical bearings again to prepare for another kind of life, ultimately, that is, give up our youth officially. I know there are some people who are miserable into this middle-age period, then have a great illumination, or a peak experience, and thereafter are simply different kinds of people. Two people whom I selected out as self-actualizing -- I didn't know anything about their past -- when I asked them about their past, they told me. One had been a suicidal woman and had made three attempts at suicide and one, a man, had been a chronic anxiety-neurotic for years. Then, there was a particular kind of peak experiences -- sort of a cosmic consciousness, one man called it -- it's the kind of peak experience in which the unity of the person with the world is perceived -- then the neurosis disappears. It just went. Hobart Mowrer is now collecting instances like that which are more common; I didn't report this because I felt I was wrong, it couldn't be, when for years, you know, psychoanalysis... But now, in comparing notes with other people we've given each other courage because other people have such accounts, too. Mowrer is deliberately collecting them.

Bryant:

Doesn't that substantially corroborate what I said about the need and the deprivation, providing the context for the peak experience?

Maslow:

That's in some people, and there would be others who just lived happily from the beginning. Life is all of a piece. As one man I think of -- he had a wonderful mother, and he had a wonderful father. His mother loved his father and his father loved his mother, mother loved him, father loved him, everybody loved everybody, and they just developed. Life was fortunate for him, everything came at the right time, everything was just fulfilled, wonderful -- he's a very old man now -- he had a wonderful wife, his work is great, everything has been marvelous, and that is also possible, a life

history of a person who could be called self-actualizing. So either one is possible. I have no statistics beyond that.

Woditsch:

Have you witnessed in your own work the emergence of the self-actualized person from a non-self-actualized person?

Maslow:

Yes. I think it must have caught from what I was saying that this is a matter of degree. I could see it between two and three o'clock -- you know, just see the person making the right choice, and then saying, well, he's on the right road.

Woditsch:

Do you notice anything that might be externally describable -- to the self-actualized person's cognition of himself in the process? Does he become much more fluid? Is he conscious and aware of great potentials? Does he have a feeling of greater alerting of some sort?

Maslow:

Many things need redefinition. The whole conception of liberty, of freedom, of control, is what comes out as nearly as I can make out -- as a kind of Spinozistic conception of freedom -- that is, freedom to love your own fate, so to speak. It's like, let's say, you work away at therapy, you're a young man, or a young woman, they're always fighting with being a young man or a young woman. And then, let's say everything goes nicely and this young woman finally accepts the fact really deeply, emotionally, that she's a woman -- she'll never be a man, no use trying, she can't make it. And then, slowly goes through first thoroughly accepting it, and then sort of tolerating it and then finally one day, waking up -- by golly, really it's marvelous to be a woman, I like it, it's wonderful, why did I ever doubt it? Well, this is Spinozistic; this is like loving what is inevitable, loving your own fate, making the best of it. Since the perception of the real self -- Horney's real self -- since this is involved, this kind of self-knowledge, self-perception, and finally, even, self-love -- you can say, that person is free, certainly freer in many ways. He's free of all the unconscious compulsions; he responds to the situation and to the elements within the situation. He's free in many, many senses yet this freedom merges with and becomes the same as, by gosh, I'm me and that's the end of it, I'm not going to try being anything different and I might just as well enjoy it.

Hoffman:

How would you put these ideas to work in the selection of counselor trainees and in their actual training program?

Maslow:

How would I? Well, I feel very strongly that one good thing of history is that this is the one group that has insisted on the analysis of the trainees. Now that's a counsel of perfection, I know, but I think that the counselor -- if I can say it in another way -- there's a paradox but it makes my point. One snotty young man came back, one of our graduates, and now he's a clinical psychologist, a graduate student. He came back with a very technological attitude which chilled me; a psychotherapist ought to be a humble man, and here was this guy who just felt like the dentist, pull out the drill -- if he didn't do it for ten minutes he'd do it for twenty minutes -- full self-confidence. You get this picture of a young, snotty kid, not knowing, not being humble before the human spirit. I tried talking with him -- I was, after all, his former teacher until he got into bad hands -- finally, I think it was in desperation I broke through. I said, "Now you think about this -- no living human being deserves to be a psychotherapist, no living human being is worthy of being a psychotherapist!" If you catch my meaning there that this is certainly true for many callings -- who is worthy to advise someone else anyway? I think this kind of training and humility which the psychoanalysts get, and they're the only ones who do, is needed. I think the rest of us will have to start thinking about self-analysis, being helped, and going through the grinder, being analyzed or therap-ed, or some darn thing.